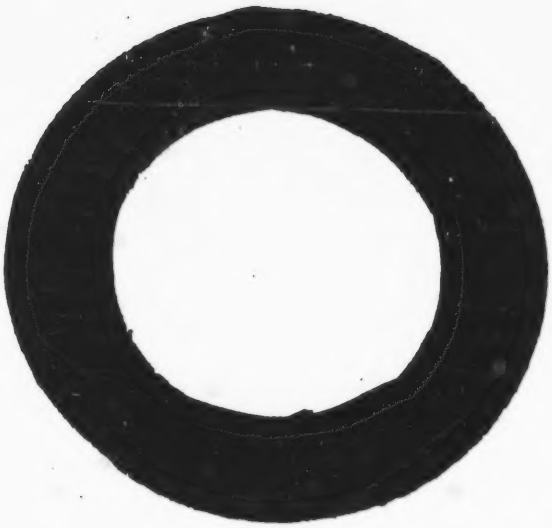

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Geneva, 12 August-4 September 1991
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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Letter dated 6 August 1991 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of "BEIJING MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT" adopted at the Ministerial Conference of Developing Countries on Environment and Development on 19 June 1991. I would be grateful if you could distribute it as an official document of the Third Session of Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Geneva from 12 August to 4 September 1991.

(Signed) FAN Guoxiang
Permanent Representative of
the People's Republic of China to
the United Nations Office at Geneva

GE.91-71812/1135H

Annex

Beijing Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development (Adopted on 19 June 1991)

We, the Ministers from 41 developing countries, met in Beijing, at the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China, from 18 to 19 June 1991, at the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, and having discussed in depth the challenges faced by the international community in establishing norms of cooperation for the enhancement of environment and development, particularly the implications for the developing countries, declare as follows:

1. We are deeply concerned about the accelerating degradation of the global environment. This is largely on account of unsustainable development models and life styles. As a result, the basic elements indispensable for human life - land, water and atmosphere - are gravely threatened. The more serious and widespread environmental problems are air pollution, climate change, ozone layer depletion, drying up of fresh water resources, pollution of rivers, lakes and the marine environment including the coastal zones, marine and coastal resources deterioration, floods and droughts, soil loss, land degradation, desertification, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, acid rain, proliferation and mismanagement of toxic products, illegal traffic of toxic and dangerous products and wastes, growth of urban agglomerations, deterioration of living and working conditions in urban and rural areas, especially of sanitation, resulting in epidemics, and other such problems. Furthermore, poverty in the developing countries is becoming aggravated, hampering the efforts to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of their people and exerting greater pressures on the environment.

2. We affirm that environmental protection and sustainable development is a matter of common concern to humankind, which requires effective actions by the international community and provides an opportunity for global cooperation. Against this background and out of a strong concern for the present and future generations, we hereby reaffirm our solemn commitment to participating actively, on the basis of differentiated responsibilities and to the best of our ability, in the global efforts for environmental protection and sustainable development, keeping in view the general principles and broad approach set out below.

For the list of developing countries attending the Conference, please see the appendix.

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

3. Changes in the environment are closely related to economic and social activities. Environmental problems must not be viewed in isolation, and need to be addressed together with the process of development, by integrating environmental concerns with the imperatives of economic growth and development. In this connection, the right to development of the developing countries must be fully recognized, and the adoption of measures for the protection of the global environment should support their economic growth and

development. In particular, the international community must actively support the efforts of developing countries to strengthen their institutional and technical capacities.

4. The special situation and needs of the developing countries should be fully taken into account. Each country must be enabled to determine the pace of transition, based on the adaptive capacity of its economic, social and cultural ethos and capabilities. The environmental problems of the developing countries arise from the conditions of poverty. The development process initiated by these countries utilizing the old polluting technologies provided by the developed countries also contributes to the degradation of the environment, which in turn, undermines the development process itself. This adversely affects not only the developing countries but also the entire world. Sustainable development and steady economic growth constitute a way to break this cycle of poverty and environmental degradation and to strengthen the capabilities of the developing countries for environmental protection. The least developed countries, disaster-prone developing countries as well as island and low-lying developing countries should be given special attention by the world community.

5. The inequities in current international economic relations confronting the developing countries, especially with regard to debt, financing, trade and transfer of technology, have led to serious consequences for them, including the reverse flow of financial resources, brain drain and backwardness in their scientific and technological capabilities. The economic development of the developing countries has thus been constrained and their capability to participate effectively in global environmental efforts undermined. It is therefore imperative to establish a new and equitable international economic order conducive to the sustained and sustainable development of all countries, particularly the developing countries, thereby creating the conditions necessary for global cooperation to protect the environment. Countries should be able to determine their own environment and development policies, without any barriers or discrimination on trade against them.

6. International cooperation in the field of environmental protection should be based on the principle of equality among sovereign States. The developing countries have the sovereign right to use their own natural resources in keeping with their developmental and environmental objectives and priorities. Furthermore environmental considerations should not be used as an excuse for interference in the internal affairs of the developing countries, nor should these be used to introduce any forms of conditionality in aid or development financing, or to impose trade barriers affecting the export and development efforts of the developing countries.

7. While the protection of the environment is in the common interests of the international community, the developed countries bear the main responsibility for the degradation of the global environment. Ever since the industrial revolution, the developed countries have over-exploited the world's natural resources through unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, causing damage to the global environment, to the detriment of the developing countries.

8. The developed countries, in view of their main responsibility for environmental degradation and their greater financial and technological capabilities, must take the lead in eliminating the damage to the environment as well as in assisting the developing countries to deal with the problems facing them.

9. The developing countries need adequate, new and additional financial resources to be able to address effectively the environmental and developmental problems confronting them. There should be preferential and non-commercial transfer of environmentally-sound technologies to the developing countries.

10. On their part, the developing countries will contribute to the process of environmental protection and enhancement by, inter alia, stepping up technical cooperation and transfer of technology among themselves.

II. SECTORAL ISSUES

11. Land degradation, desertification, floods and droughts, worsening quality and supply of fresh water resources, soil loss, marine and coastal resources deterioration, deforestation and vegetation degradation are among the serious environmental problems confronting the developing countries. These constitute a major part of the problem of global environmental degradation, to which priority should be accorded. These problems have been discussed in international fora, and some plans of action have been proposed or approved. However, no effective actions have been taken so far by the international community towards their implementation. We urge the international community to immediately initiate actions in this regard, particularly by establishing an international funding mechanism for this purpose.

12. We are gravely concerned with the continuous increase in the greenhouse gases leading to climate change and its likely implications for the global ecological system, especially the threat that they pose to the developing countries, and to the island and low-lying developing countries in particular. Responsibility for the emission of greenhouse gases should be viewed both in historical and cumulative terms, and in terms of current emissions. On the basis of the principle of equity, those developed countries which have contaminated more must contribute more. Developed countries should therefore commit themselves to adopting measures to halt human-induced climate change and to setting up mechanisms to guarantee the environmental security and development of the developing countries, including the transfer to the developing countries, on preferential and non-commercial terms, of technologies for this purpose.

13. The framework convention on climate change currently being negotiated should clearly recognize that it is the developed countries which are mainly responsible for excessive emissions of greenhouse gases, historically and currently, and it is these developed countries which must take immediate action to stabilize and reduce such emissions. Developing countries cannot be expected to accept any obligations in the near future. However, they should be encouraged through technical and financial cooperation to undertake measures within their plans, priorities and programmes which contribute both to their economic development and to the efforts to tackle the problem of

climate change, without prejudicing their growing energy needs. The framework convention must include, inter alia, firm commitments by developed countries towards the transfer of technology to developing countries, the establishment of a separate funding mechanism, and the development of the economically viable, new and renewable energy sources as well as sustainable agricultural practices, which constitute an important step to deal with the major cause of climate change. In addition, the developing countries must be provided with the full scientific, technical and financial cooperation necessary to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change.

14. We further agree that the purpose and principles of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer, as amended in June 1990, are positive in nature. The implementation by the developing countries of the obligations under the amended Protocol is subject to the effective implementation by the States parties to the Protocol of the arrangements for the provision of financial resources and transfer of technology to the developing countries. We urge the developed countries to commit themselves to the long-term arrangements for providing adequate financial resources and the expeditious transfer of technology as required of them under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, as amended in June 1990.

15. We are concerned at the accelerating loss of biodiversity. Most living organisms and their habitats in the world belong to the developing countries and they have borne the cost of conserving them over the ages. Such efforts should be recognized and supported by the international community and in international conventions and subsequent Protocols. Each State has sovereignty over its biological resources, thus conservation measures should be compatible with its national plans and priorities. The international legal instrument on biodiversity now being negotiated must clearly recognize, inter alia, the linkage between access to genetic material and transfer of biotechnology, research and development in the country of origin, sharing of the fruits of scientific research and the commercial profits. Issues of intellectual property rights must be satisfactorily resolved so that they do not become an obstacle to the transfer of technology, including biotechnology. Furthermore, the international legal instrument must recognize and reward the innovative work done by rural populations, largely in developing countries, in protecting and utilizing biodiversity.

16. We note that though control and management of hazardous wastes and toxic substances require international cooperation, the Basel Convention adopted two years ago has not entered into force. We therefore urge those States which have not ratified the Convention to consider the possibility of becoming parties to it. We urge all States to take steps to provide for a liability and compensation regime, mechanisms for transfer of low-waste technologies to the developing countries, development of capabilities for identification, analysis and disposal of wastes and mechanisms for adopting a world-wide ban on export of hazardous wastes to developing countries which do not have such capabilities. Likewise, we are concerned with the continuous illegal traffic of toxic and dangerous products and wastes, particularly from developed to developing countries. We urge the developed countries to take appropriate measures to halt such traffic.

17. Multilateral measures to protect forests and promote their sustainable management, including the proposal for a global consensus on forestry, should be aimed at enhancing the economic, social and environmental potential of forests. Management plans should integrate living-resource conservation and development priorities and goals, taking into account the needs of the local communities, including their habitats. In this respect, efforts, including specific projects of developing countries to promote the utilization of the tropical forests on a sustainable basis, should be recognized and supported. It should take the form of financial and technical assistance, as well as ensuring better market access for higher value-added timber products. It is equally important to ensure financial cooperation by the world community for forest conservation and development. Towards this end, the international community should, among other things, make efforts towards the greening of the world and countries which had in the past so destroyed their extensive forests should increase their forest cover through reforestation and afforestation programmes.

18. We are deeply concerned about the spread of the desertification process and continuity of prolonged drought cycles, which have been recognized by the international community as major environmental problems. Hence there is an urgent need to accord high priority to these problems and to take all necessary measures including the provision of appropriate financial, scientific and technical resources in order to stop and reverse the process of desertification and drought, with the aim of contributing to the preservation of the global ecological balance.

19. The marine and coastal resources deterioration resulting from irrational exploitation and pollution, mostly by developed countries, constitutes a serious development constraint for those countries that depend on them. It is necessary to enlarge cooperation on the protection and use of regional seas and to improve their rational utilization based on better knowledge and information. Discharge of toxic and nuclear wastes at seas and oceans must be banned, and that of other wastes should be strictly regulated.

20. In the densely populated cities of developing countries, insufficiency of resources causes inefficiency of the basic public services, high marginality, and degradation of the urban environment. Urban planning, including mechanisms for financing sustainable development, must contribute to enhancing the quality of life in the urban and rural settlements. In this context, the new mechanisms for financing sustainable development should give priority to these problems.

III. CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

21. The key to the success of the global efforts for the protection of the environment is the broadest possible participation of the international community. This depends to a large extent on whether substantial progress can be made on cross-sectoral issues, including in particular, the availability of adequate, new and additional financial resources and transfer of technology on preferential and non-commercial terms to the developing countries.

22. With regard to global environmental issues, every international legal instrument should include provisions for adequate, new and additional funds,

which should lay down in explicit terms the commitments of the developed countries in this regard. A key factor is the adequacy of financial resources, which should be sufficient for the developed countries to cover the incremental costs involved in addressing the issues and in implementing their relevant commitments derived from international legal instruments. Contribution by the developed countries should be sufficient to cover the costs not only of prevention but also of mitigating the cumulative effects of past actions. Developing countries could also contribute, on a voluntary basis, to the funds.

23. In order to deal with the long-existing but now rapidly aggravating environmental problems of immediate concern to the developing countries, a special Green Fund should be established to provide adequate and additional financial assistance to them. This Fund should be used to address problems which are not covered by specific international agreements, such as water pollution, coastal pollution affecting mangrove forests, shortages and degradation of fresh water resources, deforestation, soil loss, land degradation and desertification. It should also cover the costs of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the costs of building up national capabilities for environmental protection and for scientific and technological research. This Fund should be managed on the basis of equitable representation from developing and developed countries, and should ensure easy access for developing countries.

24. We emphasize the important role of science and technology in protecting the global environment, and reaffirm that measures need to be taken to ensure the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to the developing countries on preferential, most favourable, concessional and non-commercial terms. The transfer of these technologies to the developing countries should be regarded as a contribution to the common interests of humankind. The developed countries should promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, through procedures and arrangements including incentives and dis-incentives to the private sector.

IV. THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

25. In accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/228, we emphasize that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 should not only discuss the global environmental issues such as climate change and ozone layer depletion and the related response strategies. It should also be a forum to address other global issues confronting the developing countries, particularly those development issues related to environment. The relevant agreements reached at the Conference must provide guidance to international deliberations on trade, finance, technology and other similar issues. The interlinkages, where relevant, should be incorporated in each.

26. We believe that the proposed Earth Charter and agenda 21 resulting from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should be compatible with the principles embodied in relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. Furthermore, they must reflect the outcome of the conferences of developing countries with regard to the

interrelationship between environment and development, and the special situation and the needs of the developing countries. The agenda should be action-oriented to solve the environmental problems and meet the needs of the developing countries with the aim of integrating environmental concerns with development.

27. We also believe that poverty is at the root of the environmental problems of the developing world. The Conference could provide new strength and momentum to the proposed launching of a huge world programme against poverty and its effects on world environment.

V. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

28. We agree that the environment-related efforts at various international fora, particularly in the preparatory process for the 1992 Conference, will have direct and far-reaching implications for the developing countries. We emphasize that it is a pressing task for us developing countries to intensify consultations and coordination among ourselves in an effort to present our positions at international fora more effectively so as to safeguard better the interests of the developing countries as a whole.

29. We decide to strengthen further consultations and coordination among developing countries in the preparatory process for the 1992 Conference and at other international fora, along the lines of the New Delhi Conference in 1990 and the Beijing Conference.

30. We believe that measures should be taken to explore the ways and means and modalities for economic and technical cooperation among developing countries in the sphere of environment and development. In this regard developing countries will also endeavour to set appropriate environmental goals for attaining a better quality of life and environmental well-being, while at the same time identifying and assessing the financial and technological needs for achieving such goals.

31. We support the retaining and strengthening of the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme and all its programme activity centres in Nairobi, considering the success the programme has achieved to date from this venue and the need to have it better equipped for carrying out its work.

32. We re-emphasize that we intend to participate fully in the global effort to protect the environment without hindering the development process and that this can be achieved if the right climate is created for global cooperation by a positive, constructive and practical response on the part of the developed countries, so that we can jointly promote the well-being of present and future generations.

Appendix

LIST OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

ALGERIA
ARGENTINA
BANGLADESH
BRAZIL
CAMEROON
CHILE
CHINA
COLOMBIA
COTE D'IVOIRE
CUBA
EGYPT
ETHIOPIA
FIJI
GHANA
GUYANA
INDIA
INDONESIA
IRAN
JORDAN
KENYA
MALAYSIA
MALI
MEXICO
MOROCCO
NEPAL
NIGER
NIGERIA
PAKISTAN
PERU
PHILIPPINES
SAUDI ARABIA
SENEGAL
SINGAPORE
SUDAN
THAILAND
UGANDA
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
VENEZUELA
YUGOSLAVIA
ZAIRE
ZIMBABWE

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CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

Proposal submitted by the delegation of the People's Republic of China

THE GREEN FUND

Background

1. Each and every action taken to protect the global environment will require a certain amount of funding to ensure its success. This is particularly important to the developing countries.

2. As of now, global environmental funding comes mainly from the following two sources: one is the funding mechanism provided for in the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, by which the developed countries provide funding to assist the developing countries in reducing the production of such substances as CFC and achieving their replacement. The other is the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) which is used for projects in areas such as climatic change and biodiversity. These funding mechanisms have by and large concerned themselves with environmental problems of a global nature, whereas no corresponding fundings are available with respect to some special environmental problems mainly facing the developing countries.

3. The developing countries are very concerned about such a situation. They have called the attention of the international community to their special problems and special needs and called for its practical actions of assistance in the areas of funding and technology. The proposal for the Green Fund is aimed at solving some of the problems involved.

4. The Green Fund proposal was made for the first time by the Chinese Delegation at the first and second sessions of the Preparatory Committee. At that time, its concept was limited mainly to fundings for planting trees and grasses in the developing countries with a view to increasing their vegetation and their capacity to absorb greenhouse gases. This proposal has aroused much interest from many countries and international organizations which in turn have given it their endorsement and support.

5. At the Ministerial Conference of the Developing Countries on Environment and Development held in Beijing in June 1991, the Green Fund proposal also enjoyed extensive support from the developing countries. Moreover, its content has expanded to include, besides planting trees, assistance to help solve the special environmental problems facing the developing countries, problems that are not covered by the existing specific international legal instruments. Through consultation, the Green Fund was written into the Beijing Declaration (A/CONF.151/PC/85):

> "23. In order to deal with the long-existing but now rapidly aggravating environmental problems of immediate concern to the developing countries, a special Green Fund should be established to provide adequate and additional financial assistance to them. This Fund should be used to address problems which are not covered by specific international agreements, such as water pollution, coastal pollution affecting mangrove forest, shortages and degradation of fresh water resources, deforestation, soil loss, land degradation and desertification. It should also cover the costs of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the costs of building up national capabilities for environment protection and for scientific and technological research. This Fund should be managed on the basis of equitable representation from developing and developed countries and should ensure easy access for developing countries."

6. Therefore, the Green Fund is intended to be another global funding mechanism aimed at solving the special environmental problems facing the developing countries.

The Necessity for the Green Fund

7. Many developing countries are under pressure from various sides while confronting the challenges of environment and development. They must step up economic development to lift themselves from poverty and backwardness, while taking upon themselves the task of protecting the environment. They must take part in finding solutions to such global environmental issues as climate change and ozone depletion, while meeting challenges posed by the traditional environmental problems inside their countries. All these efforts require

large amounts of financial input, which is well beyond their capacity, given their present level of development. Therefore, it is necessary to furnish them with effective financial assistance.

8. The efforts to help the developing countries to solve their special, traditional, regional and domestic environmental problems are closely related to their extensive participation in international actions aimed at solving global environmental issues. In view of the fact that the developing countries are beset with economic underdevelopment and serious environmental problems domestically, if funding consideration is given only to the GEF-listed global issues without giving priority to the real needs of the developing countries, then, it will still be very difficult to endure their full, sustained and effective participation. It is hardly a comprehensive and realistic view to believe that financial assistance in certain areas will get all countries at different stages of development effectively mobilized.

9. The 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, as an important opportunity to promote even more extensive and in-depth global cooperation on environment and development, will, in addition to formulating document(s) aimed at mobilizing the international community, work to achieve a number of substantive results which will serve as the basis for follow-up actions of the future. The Green Fund, which provides a new way of funding, has already received the endorsement and support of many countries, and may become an attractive and important practical solution.

The Main Areas of Application of the Green Fund

10. In accordance with the Beijing Declaration, the Green Fund is aimed at solving the special environmental problems facing the developing countries which are not covered by the existing specific legal instruments. It will be used mainly in:

(a) Preserving forests (including mangrove forests), planting trees and increasing vegetation;

(b) Increasing the supply capacity of fresh water resources, preventing and treating water degradation;

(c) Preventing soil degradation, including control of soil loss and desertification.

11. When using the funds from the Green Fund in the above-mentioned areas, consideration will be given to the following needs:

(a) Provision of subsidies for the developing countries to purchase, on preferential terms, intellectual property for relevant technologies of environmental protection or environmentally sound technologies for economic development, and promotion of their transfer to and application in the developing countries;

(b) Provision of credit to the developing countries to help their projects of land development and ecosystem improvement, particularly their projects on large-scale afforestation, vegetation expansion and management, rational use of water resources and water degradation control;

(c) Provision of aid for the developing countries to strengthen their work of formulating environmentally sound socio-economic development programmes and their capacity to implement them, with particular emphasis on needed institutional facilities and personnel training;

(d) Provision of aid for the developing countries to develop demonstration projects which coordinate environment protection with development, such as eco-farming, alternative energy (hydro, wind or solar) projects.

The Mode of Fund Raising of the Green Fund

12. The Green Fund may follow the example of the existing economic development assistance funding institutions of the world in its fund raising efforts. Namely, the developed countries and the relevant international agencies will provide most of the funds. The developing countries will contribute as they can afford on a voluntary basis. The fund-raising methods could be diversified to include:

(a) A percentage formula, such as a certain percentage of GNP or United Nations membership assessment;

(b) Voluntary contributions by various countries;

(c) Intergovernmental grants, both bilateral and multilateral;

(d) Contribution by non-governmental organizations and individuals;

(e) Other creative methods of fund-raising, such as SDR distribution, global bond issues or global stamps, pollutant discharge quota exchange and excessive per capita pollutant discharge fees.

13. Under the current circumstances, the first method will be the main channel to draw funds for the Green Fund.

The Management of the Green Fund

14. As to the mode of management of the Green Fund, considering the special nature of the environmental problems it is set to resolve, it is advisable to make it a separate international fund. A governing council, which should be small and capable, comprising equal numbers of representatives from the developing and developed countries, should be set up and take charge of making decisions on important matters. Its day-to-day operations can be entrusted to appropriate international agencies such as the World Bank, UNDP, UNEP or FAO. The coordination would be done at a certain level in keeping with the decision taken by the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development.

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RECENT ACTIONS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER BODIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

Letter dated 8 August 1991 from the Chairman of the Fourth South Pacific Regional Environment Programme Intergovernmental Meeting and the Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations Office in New York addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

The Fourth South Pacific Regional Environment Programme Ministerial Level Intergovernmental Meeting adopted the "Ministerial Declaration" on Environment and Development in the South Pacific, and the "South Pacific Regional Statement" to the Third Session of the UNCED Preparatory Committee, at Noumea, New Caledonia on 9 July 1991.

(Signed) Manasa Seniloli
Permanent Representative of
Fiji to the United Nations
Office in New York

Annex

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

We, the Ministers and representatives of the 27 members of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), meeting in Noumea from 8 to 9 July 1991,

Recalling the 1972 Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, and reaffirming our continuing commitment to its principles; in particular, that international protection and improvement of the environment should be handled in a cooperative spirit by all countries, big or small, on an equal footing,

Reaffirming the principles espoused in the 1982 Raratonga Declaration on the Human Environment in the South Pacific,

Stressing the particular importance to our region of General Assembly resolution 43/53 which recognized climate change as a common concern of humankind, General Assembly resolution 44/206 on the particular vulnerability of small island States to the possible adverse effects of sea-level rise on islands and coastal areas, particularly low-lying coastal areas,

Recalling the 1989 Majuro Declaration on Climate Change, the 1989 Male Declaration on Global Warming and Sea Level Rise and the 1990 Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Second World Climate Conference,

Having regard to General Assembly resolution 44/228 concerning the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and stressing the importance of South Pacific participation in this Conference,

Recalling the communique of the Twenty-first South Pacific Forum (1990) in which regional heads of government recognized that sustainable development is the key to the protection of the region's resources for future generations,

Welcoming the statements from the Twenty-first South Pacific Forum and Thirtieth South Pacific Conference on the need for strengthening cooperation in the region, including through the region's institutional arrangements, to address environmental concerns through enhanced capacity for SPREP,

Recalling also the 1990 ESCAP Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific; and noting the 1991 Declaration of the Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific,

Emphasizing the uniqueness of the South Pacific region, its small land masses dispersed over the largest marine area in the world; its high degree of ecosystem and species diversity and vulnerability to natural disasters; the high degree of economic and cultural dependence on the natural environment; its diversity of cultures and languages, traditional practices and customs which are integral to the close and special relationship of Pacific peoples with their environment,

Recognizing that actions taken in one country or region should not adversely affect the environment of other countries or regions,

Deeply concerned about the vulnerability of the South Pacific to serious environmental threats, including climate change and sea-level rise, threats to marine living resources, and pollution which might result from nuclear testing, and importing, transporting, storing or destroying toxic and hazardous wastes or weapons, and, in particular, such threats generated from outside the region,

Stressing the urgency of reaching international agreement on measures to address these threats,

Emphasizing the common concerns among countries of the region and those of small island States in other regions,

Welcoming enhancement of the capacity and autonomy of SPREP,

Recalling the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty),

Welcoming the entry into force in 1990 of the 1976 Convention on the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention) and the 1986 Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (SPREP Convention) and related protocols, which between them form the framework for a comprehensive legal regime to protect the regional environment,

Noting with satisfaction the entry into force in 1991 of the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific (1989 Wellington Convention) which reflects strong concerns about this unsustainable fishing practice,

Recognizing the valuable assistance that many governments and international organizations, in particular UNEP through its Regional Seas Programme, have given to the protection of the South Pacific environment,

Committed to ensuring the continuation of the harmony which characterizes Pacific island peoples' relationship with their environment,

1. Declare our commitment to work individually and collectively, including through SPREP, to achieve sustainable development in the South Pacific region, in particular by making every effort to:

- meet the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

- promote equity in participation in ecologically sustainable development

- minimize any adverse environmental impacts of economic development through integrating environmental considerations with economic and sectoral planning and policies

- formulate resource use and development planning policies based on the precautionary principle;

2. Adopt, as an integral part of this declaration the 1991-1995 Action Plan for Managing the Environment of the South Pacific Region and undertake to work individually and collectively for its full implementation, in particular by:

- promoting ecologically sustainable resource use practices

- conserving biological diversity of the region and protecting critical ecosystems

- ensuring the ecologically sustainable use and conservation of terrestrial, freshwater and marine resources

- preventing, controlling and managing pollution and wastes

- assessing the environmental impact of development projects

- cooperation in international efforts to find solutions to pressing global environmental problems;

3. Recognize the importance of socio-economic factors in national and regional resource management activities and shall therefore endeavour to:

- adopt population policies and promote consumption patterns which foster sustainable development

- integrate health and nutrition considerations into development planning by taking steps to alleviate the impact of environmental degradation on community health and nutrition

- ensure the retention and use of traditional knowledge and practices which foster sustainable development

- increase, through education and training and information dissemination, the overall awareness and understanding of the environment and cultural heritage, to promote positive community attitudes towards the environment

- facilitate the transfer of affordable and appropriate technology, along with the associated development of human resources, skills and training, research and information sharing

- ensure effective application of funding from within national budgets and international sources to the protection of the environment and the achievement of ecologically sustainable development in the region

- explore opportunities for private sector contributions to implementing ecologically sustainable development in the region;

4. Affirm the right of individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to be informed about environmental issues relevant to them, to have access to information, and to participate in the formulation and implementation of decisions likely to affect their environment;

5. Declare our commitment to work together, including through SPREP, to develop further, as needed, the legal framework for protecting the regional environment, to facilitate the implementation of relevant regional conventions, and further enhance regional and national capacities for sustainable development;

6. Call on the international community to:

- respect the right of the people of the South Pacific, as custodians of our fragile environment, to protect our region for present and future generations

- adopt additional measures to protect the environment, particularly in the areas of climate change, sustainable fishing practices and technologies, conservation of biological diversity and protection of marine areas from pollution from all sources

- support activities in the region to understand the global climate system

- cooperate in and assist regional and national efforts to implement sustainable development in the South Pacific

- recognize SPREP as the regional organization responsible for environmental coordination, protection and management for the South Pacific;

7. Call on the UNCED Preparatory Committee to take full account of the concerns expressed in the South Pacific Regional Statement to the Third Session of the UNCED Preparatory Committee.

SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL STATEMENT TO THE THIRD SESSION
OF THE UNCED PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

The members of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) welcome the opportunity provided by the UNCED and the work of the Preparatory Committee to contribute to global understanding and achievement of ecologically sustainable development.

As part of their contribution, and pursuant to paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 44/228, the SPREP members have undertaken regional preparations for UNCED, including a regional intergovernmental meeting at Ministerial level and the preparation of a regional report, to develop their views and perspectives on the issues on the Prepcom agenda.

The unique environment and cultural resources of the Pacific island countries have been noted at earlier meetings of the Preparatory Committee. This Statement elaborates on our earlier contributions to Prepcom and will be further elaborated in our individual National Reports, and in a Regional Report to be presented to the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee.

This Statement provides the SPREP Regional perspective on what are, for us, the key issues under consideration.

As a region we can be characterized as islands and groups of islands sharing a common thread of evolutionary and human history. Many of us occupy some of the smallest habitable land masses on earth. As islands we share a unique vulnerability to natural and human-induced perturbations of both the local and global environments. We are also bound by our dependence on the physical characteristics and biological resources of the sea and the land and by our common reliance on local, and mostly vulnerable, supplies of freshwater.

As islands, mostly isolated from each other, by hundreds if not thousands of kilometres, our people have developed unique cultures and attitudes of self-reliance. Our diversity as a region is a source of strength, but like all islands we are vulnerable to environmental changes which can have catastrophic effects. The recent human history of the South Pacific contains examples of entire islands rendered uninhabitable by human environmental destruction. Unsustainable development threatens not only the livelihoods of Island people but also the islands themselves and the cultures they nourish.

These considerations naturally draw us together to seek international action on global environment issues which threaten countries in our region. Climate change, potential sea-level rise and climatic disruption are issues of grave concern to the region. Similarly, our reliance on the biological resources of our region is threatened by the patterns of large-scale exploitation of marine and terrestrial living resources. Concern to conserve our wealth of species and ecosystems underlies our interest in negotiations towards a global convention on the protection of biological diversity.

Our drive towards economic self-reliance is central to social and economic development of the region. However, many countries are already dependent on development assistance and we recognize that achieving our goal of a sustainable Pacific will require the ongoing assistance of the international community.

The following sections present our views and needs, focusing on international actions required.

1. OCEANS

1.1 The Pacific is the world's largest ocean, covering one third of the planet's surface. The health of the marine environment and its resources are integral to the very existence of Pacific communities.

1.2 To this end it is essential to:

1.2.1 recognize and respect the absolute dependence of Pacific island countries on the ocean for their very existence;

1.2.2 cease unsustainable fishing practices, particularly driftnet fishing;

1.2.3 prohibit the dumping of toxic, hazardous and nuclear substances in the Pacific;

1.2.4 prevent, reduce and control pollution which might result from nuclear testing, and from importing, transporting and storing or destroying toxic and hazardous wastes and weapons;

1.2.5 implement and endorse existing conventions covering marine pollution, international shipping and fisheries conservation and management;

1.2.6 recognize the environmental and social impacts of industrial scale fisheries and destructive fisheries practices on local coastal communities and fisheries activities;

1.2.7 use management systems based on ecosystems, rather than single species approaches;

1.2.8 assist Pacific island countries to prevent, minimize and control land-based sources of marine pollution;

1.2.9 recognize the role of the ocean as a carbon sink;

1.2.10 support efforts at international and regional levels towards management of high seas fisheries.

1.3 SPREP members are committed to strengthening national and regional capabilities to plan and manage ocean issues through:

1.3.1 the implementation of the 1991-1995 SPREP Action Plan;

1.3.2 the development of National Environmental Management Strategies in SPREP members;

1.3.3 marine pollution monitoring and control (SPREP-POL) and oil pollution contingency planning at national and regional levels;

1.3.4 coastal management planning projects (marine park development and resource inventories) and the development of appropriate EIA procedures and capabilities;

1.3.5 completing ratification of, and implementing the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific (SPREP Convention) and related protocols.

2. LAND RESOURCES

2.1. The South Pacific is a region of thousands of islands, representing less than 0.4 per cent of the world's land resources, spread over one tenth of the world's surface. For most South Pacific societies, land resources are the basis for the majority of subsistence and commercial production. High population growth rates and the displacement of traditional land management systems by introduced agriculture, mining and forestry development have placed serious stress on land resources and communities which depend on them. Such trends are particularly serious on smaller islands, especially atolls, with limited land areas, poor soils and limited mineral and other resources. Because land-based activities also directly affect coastal and marine ecosystems, the promotion of environmentally sustainable land use practices must be seen as integral to sustainable coastal and marine resource development.

2.2 It is essential to:

2.2.1 recognize the integral relationship between land, freshwater and marine resources in the Pacific region;

2.2.2 take into account the impacts of land development and resource extraction projects on other resource users and environments;

2.2.3 recognize the value and role of forests as carbon sinks and in ameliorating the impacts of climate change;

2.2.4 promote sustainable agricultural and forestry practices. Existing programmes should be changed to ensure they are environmentally sound;

2.2.5 recognize and respect the rights of traditional land owners and users;

2.2.6 adhere to and further develop codes of conduct for transnational corporations operating in the region;

2.2.7 recognize the impact of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in industrialized countries;

2.2.8 ensure the proper management of mining so as to minimize the environmental impacts and maximize the local social and economic benefits;

2.2.9 recognize the critical contribution of subsistence agriculture to the real incomes and quality of life of many South Pacific communities, and its role in providing a basis for self-reliance;

2.2.10 recognize the need for development projects, including tourism and industry, to be undertaken in a manner considering proper environmental controls.

2.3 SPREP member countries are committed to strengthening national and regional capabilities to plan and manage land resources through:

2.3.1 the implementation of the 1991-1995 SPREP Action Plan;

2.3.2 the development of appropriate EIA procedures and capabilities.

3. FRESHWATER

3.1 Water is critical to ecologically sustainable development, and freshwater resources are a major source of subsistence and cash incomes for many communities. Moreover some small islands have no surface water and extremely limited and fragile groundwater resources which, along with rainwater, are critical to sustainable settlement. Many are totally dependent on local resources with no options for importing water. These water resources are vulnerable to pollution, overuse and salinization due to increasing population, modern development and urbanization and changes in climatic patterns due to global climate change.

3.2. It is essential to:

3.2.1 recognize the constraints placed on development by limited freshwater resources and the vulnerability of such resources to contamination;

3.2.2 supply appropriate technology for reticulation and conservation of freshwater;

3.2.3 assist in development and conservation of the resource, including groundwater and surface water;

3.2.4 take account of South Pacific concerns in the design and maintenance of international water programmes.

3.3 SPREP members are committed to strengthening national and regional capabilities to manage and protect freshwater resources through;

3.3.1 the implementation of the 1991-1995 SPREP Action Plan;

3.3.2 the development of appropriate EIA procedures and capabilities;

3.3.3 pollution prevention and management programmes.

4. BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

4.1 The Pacific region is one of the world's centres of biological diversity. The western Pacific has the highest marine diversity in the world. Up to 3,000 different species may be found on a single reef. The many thousands of islands are surrounded by a rich complex of coastal ecosystems including mangroves, seagrass beds and estuarine lagoons. The evolution of island biogeography has led to a high endemism in terrestrial species, particularly on larger islands which can also have high biological diversity. Although some of the smaller islands have extremely low diversity and little or no endemism, they nevertheless have a high rate of species endangerment. Islands, in addition, are particularly vulnerable to the impact of introduced species. The maintenance of the region's biological diversity is critically important to ecologically sustainable development throughout the region and the world.

4.2. It is essential to:

4.2.1 recognize the fundamental importance of their biological resources to the peoples of the South Pacific;

4.2.2 conclude a comprehensive biological diversity convention, taking into account the unqiue characteristics and needs of the Pacific region;

4.2.3 provide funding and technical assistance to Pacific island countries to meet provisions under existing international agreements (e.g. CITIES);

4.2.4 assist Pacific island countries to identify and assess their biological resources;

4.2.5 recognize that the maintenance of biological diversity is important not only in undisturbed terrestrial and marine ecosystems, but also in agricultural and urban areas;

4.2.6 assist the region to develop agricultural, forestry and fishing practices which encourage the maintenance of the region's biological diversity.

4.3 SPREP members are committed to strengthening national and regional capabilities to plan and manage these issues by:

4.3.1 the development of an Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific;

4.3.2 implementation of the 1991-1995 SPREP Action Plan in accordance with the Action Strategy above;

4.3.3. completing ratification of, and implementing, the Convention on the Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention) and the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific (SPREP Convention) which are now in force;

4.3.4 regional programmes for the conservation of marine turtles, avifauna and marine mammals;

4.3.5 implementing an umbrella biological diversity programme to provide the means to implement the Action Strategy.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE

5.1 The islands of the South Pacific are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change and potential sea-level rise, a problem to which the region's contribution has been negligible. This vulnerability is a result of the following characteristics:

5.1.1 low-lying islands and atolls;

5.1.2 concentration of populations, development and infrastructure on the coastal zones of larger, higher islands;

5.1.3 historic and current high risk to extreme natural events (e.g. cyclones, droughts, other climatic variations, earthquakes and tectonic movements);

5.1.4 dependence on limited areas of arable soil for agriculture production;

5.1.5 dependence on coastal marine resources.

5.1.6 limited potable surface and groundwater resources.

5.2 SPREP members call for immediate action to reduce significantly greenhouse gas emissions and to conclude urgently an effective Convention on Climate Change.

5.3 It is essential to:

5.3.1 ensure that Pacific island countries do not bear disproportionate costs associated with global climate change;

5.3.2 provide funding and technical assistance for the implementation of measures that will enable island countries of the Pacific region to cope with sea-level rise and changes in climate patterns which will have detrimental effects on agriculture, water quality, health, marine and terrestrial living resources;

5.3.3 provide financial assistance to enable Pacific island countries to participate in international discussions on climate change and response options;

5.3.4 assist with monitoring climate change and sea-level rise;

5.3.5 promote activities related to better scientific understanding of the issues, including the Tropical Ocean and Global Atmosphere - Coupled Ocean Atmosphere Response Experiment (TOGA-COARE) of the World Climate Research Programme;

5.3.6 promote appropriate energy efficient technologies;

5.3.7 provide assistance in designing rational response strategies to address environmental, social and economic impacts;

5.4 SPREP members are prepared to make a contribution to international efforts to limit the effects of climate change by:

5.4.1 controlling emissions of greenhouse gases;

5.4.2 managing their national resource base on a sustainable basis;

5.4.3 cooperating in international efforts to monitor climate change in the Pacific; and,

5.4.4 implementing development strategies and policies which take into consideration climate change factors.

6. WASTES, TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

6.1 The physiographic characteristics of Pacific islands, the oceanic nature of their location and dependence on a marine and limited terrestrial resource base, including limited availability of freshwater, makes them highly vulnerable to contamination by toxic and hazardous wastes and chemicals, and radioactive materials. The history of waste disposal in the region has led to a growing appreciaton of the dangers this poses to the Pacific environment and its communities. SPREP members reject the perception that the region should continue to be used as a dumping ground for such materials. This position is reinforced by the acknowledged past and current impacts on the health and welfare of our island peoples resulting from such action by countries and corporations from outside the region.

6.2 It is essential to:

6.2.1 prevent, reduce and control pollution which might result from nuclear testing and from importing, transporting, storing and disposal of toxic and hazardous wastes and weapons and implement the relevant international conventions;

6.2.2 cooperate in the implementation of the prior consent procedure for the export of toxic chemical substances to the region as provided for in the London Guidelines;

6.2.3 provide technical, legal and administrative resources for the adoption of clean production technologies, the prevention of pollution and management of wastes;

6.2.4 generate and disseminate information on the sources, levels, amounts, kinds, trends and effects of pollution and waste within the Pacific region; and,

6.2.5 strengthen the capabilities of national and regional institutions to carry out pollution monitoring and research and to formulate and apply pollution prevention, control and abatement measures;

6.2.6 address the consequences of past activities which have generated toxic and hazardous waste products that have damaged the health and livelihood of island peoples.

6.3 SPREP members are committed to strengthening national and regional capabilities to plan and manage these issues through the following measures:

6.3.1 developing and implementing appropriate legislative and administrative measures for the prevention, control and monitoring of pollution and management of wastes at national and regional levels;

6.3.2 cooperating on a regional basis for the prevention, control and monitoring of pollution and hazardous wastes; in particular to ensure that the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (the SPREP Convention), including its Protocols on dumping and pollution emergencies, are ratified and implemented by respective members;

6.3.3 minimizing the amount of waste produced as a consequence of increased industrialization by members of the region, and maximizing recycling of such wastes; and,

6.3.4 cooperating in international efforts to generate and disseminate information on the sources, levels, amounts, kind, trends and effects of pollution and waste within the region.

7. CROSS SECTORAL ISSUES

7.1 Financial resources

Most countries in the region are highly dependent on development assistance. While achieving a high level of economic independence and growth is the objective of all countries, the achievement of ecologically sustainable development will require both new types of international funding and adjustment of national development policies. This assistance and these policies must be based on a clearly defined set of individual island needs.

SPREP members seek from the international community a recognition that all development assistance, whether new or ongoing, shoud be directed towards ecologically sustainable forms of development. Development assistance should also provide for the protection and restoration of sensitive or threatened environments. This could be achieved in part by donor governments applying environmental guidelines to assistance projects which are consistent with their own national environmental guidelines.

The region also urges greater coordination between donors and implementing agencies in seeking to meet priority regional needs.

One specific funding requirement which needs to be addressed by UNCED is the provision of technical assistance to developing countries of the region, on request, to enable them to accede to and implement existing international environment agreements.

The South Pacific region through SPREP is actively seeking to identify and coordinate new and additional financial resources for the implementation of ecologically sustainable development.

7.2 Transfer of technology

The Pacific island countries are not well endowed with the technical infrastructure necessary to promote and achieve the effective transfer of new or novel technologies. Even in established technologies, many countries lack the necessary capabilities to provide ongoing maintenance and repair. In many cases, the major requirement for technology in the South Pacific is in the area of management and technical expertise relevant to the ecologically sustainable development of natural resources. Other specific areas of need for environmentally sound technologies include combating pollution, coastal engineering, freshwater reticulation and quality control and energy production.

The Pacific island countries require international assistance in building local capacity to assess, apply, adapt, absorb and maintain environmentally sound and appropriate technologies.

The Pacific island countries would also welcome increased technical cooperation with developed countries as well as with developing countries, particularly in the fields of traditional technologies and on their experiences in adapting and adopting new forms of environmentally sound technology.

The SPREP members are actively engaged in the development of local education and training institutions which can form the basis of increased international efforts in the field of technology transfer.

7.3 Institutions and legal issues

The legal and institutional framework for the achievement of ecologically sustainable development in the Pacific island countries largely exists in the current multilateral and regional conventions and organizations. In

particular the framework for environmental protection at the regional level exists in the form of the SPREP and Apia Conventions and in the SPREP Secretariat. SPREP members see regional cooperation as crucial for addressing environmental concerns in the South Pacific and have accordingly taken steps to enhance the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme and give it appropriate status.

The likelihood of successful ecologically sustainable development would be significantly enhanced by improved coordination among United Nations agencies and NGOs dealing with the coastal and marine environment. This should include improved working relationships among UNEP, UNESCO, the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC), IMO, FAO, IAEA, and the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Secretariat. This coordination should be reflected on a regional level and include regional Pacific organizations.

7.4 Energy

Because of the absence of proven fossil fuel reserves in all Pacific island countries, except Papua New Guinea, increasing dependency on imported fossil fuel is seen as a major constraint to ecologically sustainable development. The region's dispersed population and the long distances between major population centres make efficient energy production and distribution a fundamental problem for the region. The develoment of renewable energy alternatives and energy conservation is therefore a priority.

The link between existing forms of energy production, current world consumption levels and the onset of climate change is not lost on the countries of the South Pacific.

Our greatest need is for economically sustainable, clean, renewable, moderate scale energy production technology to initially complement, and eventually replace, existing sources of energy.

We recognize that a coordinated global effort to develop and disseminate the appropriate technology is an urgent need, not just for the Pacific, but for all developing countries. Combined with a new approach to energy planning, demand management and pricing, the issue of new energy technologies is one of the most fundamental issue of ecologically sustainable development.

7.5 Population and environmental degradation

The Pacific island countries have a culturally diverse and highly dispersed population. Population problems are generally highly localized and often associated with urbanization and growth in established centres. In some countries the local population is supplemented with large numbers of tourists, placing additional pressure on local infrastructure and the environment. Population density and population growth rates in some countries of the region are as high as those anywhere in the world. Other countries are suffering from a different problem: substantial loss of population through emigration to metropolitan centres creating severe human resource shortages.

The Pacific island countries look to the international community to continue to provide guidance and programmes in the area of populaton planning.

For their own part the SPREP members have adoptd, as part of the SPREP Action Plan 1991-1995, a commitment to providing information and access to international population programmes for those Pacific countries which are suffering the adverse effects of population pressure.

7.6 Traditional practices

Many traditional Pacific island resource management practices were relatively sustainable. They were based on renewable inputs, the maintenance of biological diversity, were non-polluting and did not require imported energy inputs. Despite widespread monetization of Pacific island economies, these systems still provide the bulk of the real income of most rural, and a significant proportion of urban, communities. In short, there exist alongside one another, communities of almost entirely monetized and those which still enjoy a high degree of subsistence affluence obtained from traditional resource management systems.

The international community, and in particular the developed countries and transnational corporations which have dealings with the region, need to recognize that these two cultures, a western style economy and a traditional society, exist side by side, and in dynamic tension, in the Pacific island countries.

Sensitivity is required to ensure that developments imposed or fostered from outside the region meet the needs and take account of South Pacific cultures.

Developments which are compatible with traditional practice and knowledge are, in the Pacific, more likely to be sustainable than those which take a narrow economic, albeit environmentally sensitive, approach.

7.7 Poverty

The link between poverty and the environment is being addressed here for the first time at a regional level. Poverty is an emerging issue in a number of Pacific island countries but needs to be understood and addressed against the background of traditional lifestyles and economic change. While conventional economic and social indicators demonstrate that a significant percentage of Pacific island populations are at poverty level, the true picture is clouded by the fact that a high proportion of people still live subsistence lifestyles. For many of our people it is the health and general social indicators of poverty which tell the real story, not the purely economic indicators. As has already been stated many communities still enjoy a high degree of subsistence affluence obtained from traditional resource management systems.

Indeed, it appears that urbanization and the shift to a monetary economy are part of the problem. Threats to viable subsistence lifestyles, such as the rapid depletion of natural resources through over-exploitation, are apparent in many countries. This is contributing to the emergence of poverty

in our region. International action to address the linkage between poverty and environmental degradation must address the impact of unsustainable economic development on traditional, subsistence cultures.

The issue of equity, both within and between generations, is central to the environment and development debate for SPREP members. Any set of general principles on ecologically sustainable development must contain an expression of this concept.

7.8 Environmental health

Small isolated communities are particularly vulnerable to the rapid spread of infection and to the adverse effects of local environmental degradation. In the Pacific island countries, environmental health problems are strongly linked to the supply and quality of freshwater and to the introduction of toxins into the general environment. High incidences of nutritional disorders and nutrition-related non-communicable diseases, due to the deterioration of traditional wildfood and agricultural systems is also seen as a major environmental health issue.

SPREP members stress that the international community has an obligation to developing countries of the region in relation to the control of hazardous substances. It must ensure that those who would propose to introduce or produce in the region substances potentially damaging to human health, provide to the people and governments of the region sufficient information on those activities so that informed decisions can be made. Further, proponents of potentially hazardous activities must accept an obligation to eliminate any potentially negative effects on the people of the region and accept liability for unforeseen negative effects which might occur.

SPREP members emphasize that that the region is neither a dumping nor testing ground for toxic and hazardous substances nor for outmoded technologies which generate such substances.

SPREP membres also emphasize that the international community must support development which promotes traditional food system management and maintenance and minimizes the import and promotion of nutritionally inferior foods, the increased consumption of which appears to be the main causal factor in nutrition-related poor health.

7.9 Education and public awareness

The need for education on environmental issues in order to raise public awareness and motivation is common to all Pacific island countries. Education also has an important role in building upon the skills of indigenous people in the area of environmental and natural resource management. All countries of the region have a need for more education about environmental issues, both at a grassroots level and through the formal education system. The training of technicians, scientists and decision-makers to enable them to deal with the issues of ecologically sustainable development is also an important educational requirement.

The 1991-1995 SPREP Action Plan emphasizes the importance of, and need for, access to environmental information for all groups, in particular women and youth. This will enhance the management of resources and environment within the region.

Pacific island countries need the support of the international community, particularly in these areas of education and public awareness.

It is also essential that the international community is made aware of the unique perspectives and problems of the Pacific island countries. This is seen as an integral part of the process towards achieving sustainable development for the people of the South Pacific.

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ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF WASTES, PARTICULARLY HAZARDOUS WASTES, AND OF TOXIC CHEMICALS, AS WELL AS PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN TOXIC AND DANGEROUS PRODUCTS AND WASTES: ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF WASTES, PARTICULARLY HAZARDOUS WASTES

PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN TOXIC AND DANGEROUS PRODUCTS AND WASTES

Progress Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

In response to decision No. 2/15 adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its second session on the subject of "Prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes" the following information has been made available to UNCED from UNEP.

On 22 December 1989 the General Assembly adopted resolution 44/226 on traffic in and disposal, control and transboundary movements of toxic and dangerous products and wastes. Earlier resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in 1987 and 1988 had also dealt with the matter. In July 1988 and July 1989 respectively, the Secretary-General reported on the question of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly,

drawing on information from Governments provided by UNEP. The Executive Director of UNEP wrote to Governments in January and October 1988 respectively, with a request to report on cases of illegal traffic. In a preliminary report to the Economic and Social Council, in July 1988 (E/1988/72), the Secretary-General reported that out of 16 countries which had responded to the letter of the Executive Director of UNEP, seven had provided concrete cases of illegal traffic in both toxic and dangerous products and wastes. In a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly dated 18 July 1989 (A/44/362 and Corr.1) out of 62 countries which responded to UNEP, less than half identified instances of illegal traffic. In many cases replies were incomplete or Governments reported that it was difficult for them to unequivocally identify instances of illegal traffic as a result of absence of relevant legislation or deficiencies in enforcement and control under existing legislation. Also the absence of an internationally agreed definition of illegal traffic has made reporting on such cases difficult.

General Assembly resolution 44/226, in its section I requested specifically each regional commission, within existing resources, to contribute to the prevention of the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes by monitoring and making regional assessments of this illegal traffic and its environmental and health implications. It further requested the regional commissions to interact among themselves, and in cooperation with UNEP, with a view to maintaining efficient and coordinated monitoring and assessment of the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes.

UNEP has been informed by the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) that countries in the region had been approached on 11 May 1990 to provide information on hazardous waste generation, disposal methods and transboundary movements of dangerous wastes and products. On 20 September 1990, ESCAP reported that it had received replies from eight countries and that only one country reported instances of illegal traffic. No further reports have been made available to UNEP by ESCAP or other regional commissions. UNEP and ESCAP have recently agreed on a joint project on monitoring and regional assessment of illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes in the ESCAP region.

The Basel Convention deals specifically with the issue of illegal traffic in its article 9 and in fact provides a definition for it. The Convention is expected to enter into force during the first half of 1992. Contracting Parties will use its provisions as a basis to identify and improve the control of illegal movements of wastes covered by the Convention. In their annual reporting, Contracting Parties to the Convention will also be requested to provide more detailed insight into such matters as the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and other wastes including amounts exported, imported, and disposed of. Such reports will allow the secretariat to monitor closely international movements of wastes covered by the Convention.

In connection with resolution 4 of the Basel Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Global Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes, several Governments have responded to UNEP that they have taken measures or are planning to take measures to monitor and control illegal traffic in wastes covered by the Basel Convention.

The Bamako Convention is fully consistent with the Basel Convention as it relates to the definition of illegal traffic. Upon entry into force of this regional agreement, African countries are expected to collectively take measures regarding monitoring and control of illegal traffic in wastes covered by the Convention.

The Seventh Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its related protocols, which is scheduled to take place in Cairo, 8-11 October 1991, will discuss a draft protocol for the prevention of pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. The draft protocol contains provisions for monitoring and control of illegal traffic in hazardous wastes. It is expected that similar protocols will be developed in future for other regional marine environment action plans.

As regards illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products, both the London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade and the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, although non-binding instruments, contain provisions that provide a measure of control over illegal trade in certain types of chemical products including pesticides. For chemicals banned or severely restricted for health or environmental reasons, both instruments include the principle of Prior Informed Consent (PIC). The PIC procedure will be initiated during August 1991 and will be operated jointly by FAO and UNEP. The procedure contains provisions for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing countries as to whether they wish to receive future shipments of chemicals which have been banned or severely restricted. One hundred and nine Governments have to date designated national authorities for the operation of the PIC procedure at the national level. An inventory of all chemicals banned or severely restricted in participating countries will be established by UNEP/IRPTC and FAO by the end of 1991. The PIC procedure will be initiated for six pesticides during August/September 1991. It is expected that these measures will help to significantly reduce illegal traffic in banned and severely restricted chemicals.